Ties with USA and Russia

2148. SHRI SABIR ALI:
SHRI MOHAMMED ADEEB:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the present policy *vis-à-vis* USA and Russia; and

(b) the steps that are proposed to further strengthen the ties with those countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) and (b) Government of India desires to strengthen and deepen relations with the United States of America in the existing areas of bilateral cooperation such as defence and security, energy, space, education, economy and commerce, science and technology, health, people to people contacts among others and to identify possible areas of collaboration in newer areas of cooperation to take the bilateral ties to a higher level of engagement. It also seeks to intensify engagement with the US on global issues of common concern such as Climate Change, Disarmament, international terrorism and maritime security to strengthen Indo-US strategic partnership.

Russia is a strategic partner of India. India-Russia strategic partnership provides a solid framework for long-term and all-round development of relations. Mutual development and prosperity of our peoples are core objectives of this partnership. Rashtrapatiji will pay a State Visit to Russia in September, 2009. The India-Russia Annual Summit meeting between the Prime Minister of India and the President of Russia will take place in Moscow in December, 2009. The 15th session of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission (IRIGC) on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation, co-chaired by the External Affairs Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister of Russia will take place in Moscow in October, 2009. The 9th session of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-MTC), co-chaired by the Defence Ministers of India and Russia will take place in Moscow in October, 2009. During these visits, discussions will take place with the Russian leadership on all strategic areas of bilateral cooperation with Russia such as defence, space, energy including nuclear energy, science and technology and trade and economy.

Religious protection to Sikhs in US

†2149. SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI:
SHRI BHAGWATI SINGH:
SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Sikhs in American army have been banned from using their religious symbol;

(b) if so, whether Government plans to take any concrete initiative to provide religious protection to overseas Indians; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.